

tion in determining which side he occupied, if you had asked him whether he wanted the British troops whipped in America, battle after battle? He would have said: "Although the war was provoked by the injustice and oppression of Great Britain, I must be on the side of my country, when I am forced to take a position in the contest. I may not be in favor of the policy of the prosecution of the war between my people here and the people on the other side, but I am on this side, and not on the other."

Look at the war of 1812. Was ever a war opposed more bitterly than that war was opposed by the federal party, as unnecessary, as waged for selfish purposes, violently opposed, vituperatively opposed; going further sometimes than even under a republican government they were justifiable in going? Yet if you will go to the battle monument in Baltimore, upon that historical record you may find among the names of the men who died at North Point in the defence of their country, men who were born federalists and died federalists, and opposed the policy of the war up to the very moment of their deaths. Believing that the war was unnecessary, and ought to have been avoided, and might have been avoided, yet they laid down their lives upon the battlefield in defence of their country.

Take the Mexican war. Does not everybody recollect that remarkable declaration of John Van Buren, that the plains of Mexico were wet with whig blood? Was there a whig in the land, however opposed to the Mexican war, who had any hesitation in his own mind upon which side he was, and where his sympathies were when it was noised about that General Taylor's little army was beleaguered in a little Mexican town? Even Mr. Corwin's celebrated declaration went no further than this—"If I were a Mexican, I would welcome the invader with bloody hands to a hospitable grave." But Mr. Corwin was an American, and not a Mexican, and whatever part he may have thought it his duty to take with regard to this war, as a citizen of the United States he was constrained to be, not actively, but in his feelings, on the side of the United States.

There are a great many persons who from conscientious convictions cannot be in favor of any war. Yet as citizens they are to be counted on one side and not on the other. If any man can say that, I am perfectly willing to admit him not only to vote but to hold office in this State. I have no desire to enforce my political convictions upon anybody. But I say, in a State like this, how is it possible for a man to properly rule over the people of this State if he is on the other side, if his heart is with the other army, and he wants them to succeed? Could a man be governor of this State, fit to rule over these people, if he wished the army of Virginia to invade

this State, and take its great commercial city and its capital? It is rank absurdity.

How could he hold that position? He might hold it, and people might vote for him; but what would he do? Taking advantage of the forms of law to place him in a prominent position in this government, he would hand over traitorously the territory of this government to the enemies of the government. That is the only thing for which he could be consistently and rationally placed in power. Is there no injustice in that? Does any man suppose that the people of this State are going to tolerate a rule which under the forms of the ballot box really means success to the rebellion?

What is the obligation imposed here?

"And I do further swear or affirm that I will, to the best of my abilities, protect and defend the Union of the United States, and not allow the same to be broken up and dissolved, or the government thereof to be destroyed under any circumstances, if in my power to prevent it, and that I will at all times discountenance and oppose all political combinations having for their object such dissolution or destruction."

Where is the difficulty about that? Does that bind a man to any particular policy of the administration?

But where is the necessity gentlemen say, when you have put in the first part of the oath an obligation to support the constitution, of putting in also the obligation to protect and defend the Union? I suppose that the constitution and the Union are the same things; and the oath is to respect the Union and the constitution. How can a man support the constitution without supporting the Union? If there is no government where is the constitution. This government may be broken up into fifty fragments, and each one of these little fragments may be a little republican State, and it may support the old constitution of the United States so far as it is applicable. When a man swears to support the constitution of the United States, he takes an oath to support it in all respects in which it is possible. And thus though men may swear to support the constitution and not the Union, he must support the Union necessarily; and every one of these men is bound to stand by the Union and the constitution. But if you take away a large proportion of the people of a territory, there is no Union left, or constitution left, or government left.

But there is a practical reason which extends to all this argument, why we should introduce this oath more than anybody else. What is our position here in Maryland? The gentleman from St. Mary's (Mr. Dent) very eloquently said that the State of Maryland had had no voice, and was not responsible for the oaths imposed upon her people, because she was powerless to resist. Yet the